

Election in Response to Election of Species Requirement:

Applicant hereby elects Species a) related to Fig. 1, with traverse.

It is respectfully submitted that at least claims 6, and 10-19 read upon Species a), and that at least claim 6 is generic to all Species.

REMARKS**Telephone Conferences**

At the outset, Applicant wishes to thank Examiners Rodriguez and Singh for the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during various telephone conferences regarding the Election of Species requirement. During the interviews, it was tentatively agreed that there are certain errors in the Election of Species requirement, and that Applicant would submit argument to traverse the requirement with a formal Response to the Election of Species requirement.

Arguments

Applicant's elections are made with traverse because it is respectfully submitted that there is no serious burden on the Office to examine all pending claims 1-19 at this time, especially in view of the substantial amount of time and effort both the Office and Applicant have spent on prosecuting the pending claims to date. Specifically, Applicant has responded to three separate Office Actions, filed one RCE, and conducted one personal interview in order to move prosecution forward for this matter with regard to each of the pending claims. To require separation of prosecution of the claims at this time would effectively deny the Applicant the ability to timely prosecute all claims for the invention, and would result in a great deal of unjustified cost to Applicant.

In addition to the above equitable argument, Applicant respectfully submits that the Species as designated in the outstanding Election of Species Requirement is in error. For example, Species a) and Species b) directed to Figs. 1 and Figs. 8, respectively, are actually directed to the same embodiment in Applicant's specification, and are therefore not appropriately subject to restriction/election.

Applicant's traversal is also made in order to allow for rejoinder of claims should a generic claim be allowed.

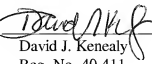
For all of the above reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the Election of Species requirement and that all claims continue to be examined on their merits. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would help move prosecution of this case forward, he is urged to contact Applicant's representative at the below listed telephone number.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the present patent application is in condition for allowance. An early indication of the allowability of the present patent application is therefore respectfully solicited.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required. If, however, there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-2821. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,
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